



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

[RUS-21-ELECTRIC-0006]

Notice of Request for Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) intention to request a revision of a currently approved information collection package and invites comments.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*] to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pamela Bennett, Rural Development Innovation Center, Regulations Management Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0793, South Building, Washington, DC 20250-0793. Telephone: (202) 720-9639. Email: pamela.bennett@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that

interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for approval. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) The accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments may be sent by the Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and, in the lower "Search Regulations and Federal Actions" box, select "Rural Housing Service" from the agency drop-down menu, then click on "Submit." In the Docket ID column, select RUS-21-ELECTRIC-0006 to submit or view public comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically. Information on using Regulations.gov, including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "User Tips" link.

Title: Advance of Loan Funds and Budgetary Control and Other Related Burdens.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0015.

Expiration Date of Approval: February 28, 2022

Type of Request: Revision of currently approved collection.

Abstract: The Rural Utilities Service, an Agency with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, administers the electric loan and loan guarantee program authorized under the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et seq). In order to protect and ensure the Government's security interest in loans, and in exercise of due diligence, electric borrowers furnish information to RUS regarding the condition, financial or otherwise, related to expenditure of loan funds. This information collection is necessary to comply with applicable provisions of the RUS loan contract. RUS borrowers submit requisitions to RUS for funds for project costs incurred. Insured loan funds will be advanced only for projects which are included in the RUS approved borrowers workplan or approved amendment and in an approved loan, as amended. The process of loan advances establishes the beginning of the audit trail of the use of loan funds which is required for subsequent RUS compliance audits. There are two official forms included in this information collection, RUS Forms 595 and 219.

The RUS Form 595 is used as a requisition for advances of funds. The form helps to assure that loan funds are advanced only for the budget purposes and amount approved by RUS. According to the applicable provisions of the RUS loan contract, borrowers must certify with each request for funds to be approved for advance, which funds are for projects previously approved. When a prospective borrower requests and is granted a RUS loan, a loan contract is established between the Federal government, acting through the RUS Administrator, and the borrower. At the time this contract is entered into, the borrower must provide RUS with a list of projects for which loan funds will be spent, along with an itemized list of the estimated costs of these projects. Thus, the borrower receives a loan based upon estimated cost figures.

The RUS Form 219, Inventory of Work Orders, is one of the documents the borrower submits to RUS to support actual expenditures and an advance of loan funds. The form also serves as a connecting link and provides an audit trail that originates with the advance of funds and terminates with evidence supporting the propriety of expenditures for construction or retirement projects.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.56 hours per response.

Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; Business or other for profit.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 598.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 15.54.

Estimated Number of Total Responses: 9,292

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 14,523 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Pamela Bennett, Rural Development Innovation Center, Regulations Management Division, at (202) 720-9639. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Christopher A. McLean,
Acting Administrator,
Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 2021-12146 Filed: 6/9/2021 8:45 am; Publication Date: 6/10/2021]